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ABSTRACT

The case study, where students analyze actual business situations and discuss complex business issues in a relatively risk-free environment, is a particularly good method for teaching business English. Graduate business programs use both written and video case studies in the classroom. Videocases bring the case study alive on film and may be especially useful for a course in business English. Videocases present a close-up look at a successful or unsuccessful company. Students can be asked to consider what aspects of the corporate strategy have contributed to success or failure, make recommendations for future action, and role-play based on the case study. Supplementary materials can be used to facilitate comprehension by developing background schemata. The instructor must decide how much supplementary English language training is appropriate to the group's proficiency level. Materials to accompany a videocase about the marketing of a new clothing line are appended, and a list of useful videocases is supplied. (MSE)

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A VIDEOCASE APPROACH TO ESP/BUSINESS

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"A Videocase Approach to ESP/Business"

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The growing interest in courses with an ESP/business focus in intensive ESL/EFL institutes reflects not only the influx of international business people to the United States for language learning purposes but also the current trend in intensive programs to teach language through content. Participants in these courses may include students pursuing or planning to pursue academic business programs, business people who want to improve their English, or simply people with an interest in business topics. One teaching method which is particularly well-suited for these business English courses is the case study method. The case method is an integral part of leading business programs around the world. In this method, students analyze actual business situations and gain hands-on experience discussing complex business issues in a relatively risk-free environment. The use of the case method in the ESP classroom has been discussed in the literature (Westerfield, 1989; Grosse, 1988; Charles, 1984; Huckin & Olsen, 1984; Piotrowski, 1982).

MBA programs employ both written and video case studies in the classroom. Videocases bring the written case study alive on film and for that reason may be even better suited for ESP courses. The visuals serve to clarify events or concepts which may be difficult for students to comprehend in the written case. Furthermore, some of the international videocases contain segments in the students' first language with English subtitles, such as "The Colonel

Comes to Japan," which deals with Kentucky Fried Chicken's successful entry into the Japanese market. This use of Japanese facilitates comprehension and reduces affective barriers among beginning Japanese business students.

The videocase framework not only provides authentic business material which is intrinsically interesting, or at least relevant, to the business student, but also offers the inherent benefits associated with video in the language classroom (Lonergan, 1984). Videocases are rich in colorful, current business idioms and high-frequency business vocabulary. In addition, there is the opportunity to focus on nonverbal cues which may be universal or culture-specific, i.e. gestures, facial expressions, and other types of body language of importance to the successful international business executive. All of the above features combine to make videocases a motivating and exciting medium for the business English classroom.

Videocases present a close-up look at either a successful or unsuccessful company. To develop their knowledge of business concepts, students can be asked to consider what aspects of the corporate strategy have contributed to the company's success or failure. Following this analysis, students can brainstorm and give recommendations on what steps the company should take in the future. Supplementary readings on the company or relevant business areas can be used as a follow-up or can preceed viewing of the videotape to facil itate comprehension by developing background schemata. Students can also assume the roles of crucial characters in the case and enact a scene or go beyond the case and envision a subsequent interaction.

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As in a written case study course, the instructor must decide how much supplementary ELT support is appropriate with a particular group of students. A less-advanced group may require a more thorough explanation and reinforcement of vocabulary and idioms crucial to a case, whereas an advanced group can focus primarily on the central business issues with minimal overt language instruction on the part of the instructor. The articles listed in the reference section of your handout give suggestions on how to provide supplementary ELT support.

In the presentation I show a segment from a videocase entitled, "Not by Jeans Alone." This is from the Enterprise series of videocases and deals with the marketing strategies involved in the launching of a new product line, "Tailored Classics," by Levi Strauss. A written version of the case is also available, so I ask my students to read that and prepare to take part in a brief class discussion of Levi's corporate history before seeing the tape. Viewing format depends upon the language level of the class. A thirty-minute tape can be divided into three segments with repeated viewings for a class needing more language support, or can be shown in larger segments for an advanced class of MBA students or corporate executives.

In the handout are sample language development exercises which focus on note-taking skills, predicting vocabulary from context, comprehension and discussion questions, writing, and case analysis. Supplementary readings from central business content areas, such as marketing, management, or finance, serve to reinforce key vocabulary as well as to expand the students' business knowledge.

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Video is clearly a motivating, rich resource for the ESP classroom. The videocases listed in the handout can provide the framework for meaningful, integrated activities that encourage the acquisition of both language and business content.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION FOR WORLD BUSINESS

AND THE PROFESSIONS

"A Videocase Approach to ESP/Business"

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"NOT BY JEANS ALONE"

Time line of the changing market for Levis

1850	1950	1960-1970	1980
Workers Miners	Marlon Brando. Start of sales boom.	Baby-boomers. A sign of rebellion. Sales continued to increase.	Change in market demographics: 1. Stiff competition. 2. Baby-boomers are growing up.

Faced with this saturated, competitive market, Levi executives know they have to act. What are their alternatives?

1. Buy up another clothing manufacturer.
2. Buy a company in a completely different area.
3. Expand their own line; develop a new product.

Which course of action did they choose?

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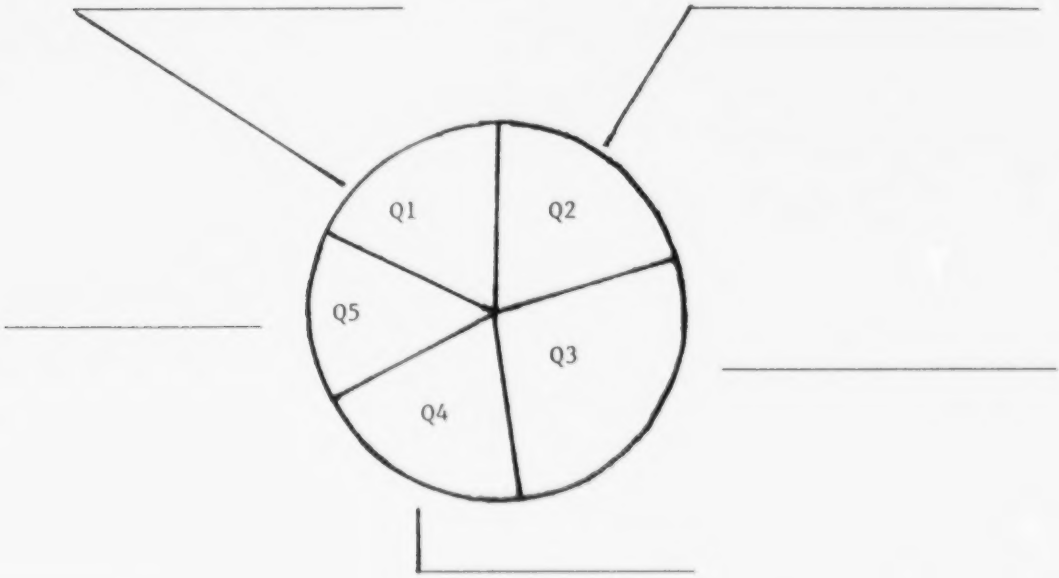
LEVI STRAUSS COMPANY: MENSWEAR MARKET SEGMENTATION STUDY

Describe the five different market segments Levi uncovered.



NEW EXPRESSIONS?

1. The company's marketing strategy was not based on a <u>hunch</u>, but on years of careful research.	a. to fight to achieve sthg.
2. A <u>price shopper</u> buys things at discount stores.	b. a guess or strong feeling
3. The company's marketing strategy was directed toward their <u>target consumer</u>.	c. sthg. used to attract something (or someone) into a trap
4. The company decided to <u>go after</u> the contract <u>tooth and nail</u>; they wouldn't rest until the papers were signed.	d. a person very concerned with the cost of an item
5. The fisherman put the <u>bait</u> on the hook and waited for the fish to bite.	e. without the possibility for growth
6. Competition and a change in demographics have resulted in a <u>saturated</u> market for jeans.	f. the group of people expected to buy a product

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DISCUSSION

1. Levi makes only jeans. T/F

2. Most of Levi's clothes are in the upper/middle price range. T/F

3. What is "the bait"?

4. Where does Levi Strauss usually sell its clothes? Why?

5. Is this strategy a potential problem with their new product? Why or why not?

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Are jeans popular in your native country? Who wears them? Do people know the name "Levi"?

2. Do you own a pair of designer jeans? If so, why did you choose them over a pair of Levi's? What is more important to you - fashion or practicality?

3. What market segment do you fit into? Why?

4. Would you see the same consumer groups among men in your native country?

SPECIAL TERMS - APPAREL

slacks
vest
sports coat
lapels
three-piece suit
sold as separates
wool blend
navy blue pinstripe suit
tailor a suit
rivets

BUSINESS CONCEPTS

market segmentation
target consumer
market niche
focus group

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MEMO

Write a memo: 1. You are Peter Haas, Division Head for Tailored Classics. Write a memo to your boss, Bob Segal, to try to convince him to continue the marketing effort for the Tailored Classics line.

Include: A summary for your efforts so far
Rationalization for your marketing strategy
Explanation of how you plan to change your strategy in light of poor sales
Reasons why the marketing for Tailored Classics should continue
An explanation of mistakes you made in your strategy, if you think you made any, and your predictions for the future.

2. You are Bob Segal, Senior Vice President. You have received the Haas memo. Respond with your own memo in which you either accept or reject his plan.

Include: An explanation of your loss of confidence in the product
Analysis of why you think the marketing strategy hasn't worked (Focus on Q2 group, problem of selling in dept. stores, use of information from focus groups, Haggar Co. example, etc.)
Whatever your decision, a statement of the steps you expect Haas to take now.

Steps in the Process

1. Meet in small groups (Peter Haas/Bob Segal) to brainstorm on ideas for the memo.

2. Hand in a list of ideas from the small group session.

3. Peter Haas - Hand in completed memo (1-2 pages maximum)
This will be given to the Bob Segals for response.

4. Bob Segal - Hand in a memo in response to the Peter Haas memo you received.

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Text to accompany selected cases: Sevareid, Eric. Enterprise: Doing Business in America. New York: New American Library. 1983.

"All in the Game"	Video computer game business
"Anatomy of an Embargo"	Embargo on banana imports from Nicaragua
"Bankrupt"	Inforex's failure to innovate
"Battle of the Blimps"	Airship Industries takes on Goodyear
"Billion Dollar Day"	Three international currency traders
"Boeing Vs. the World"	Boeing as leader in aircraft industry
"Buy-Out"	Worker buy-out of General Motors
"California Crude"	Joint venture in off-shore drilling
"Catfish Fever"	Farmers invest in catfish
"Chef's Special"	A small-business entrepreneur
"Dogfight Over New York"	NY Air goes after Eastern
"Fast Horse in a Bull Market"	International racehorse market
"Fired"	Unemployed executives and corporate responsibility
"Gulliver's New Travels"	Break-up of AT&T
"Hardball"	The business of baseball
"Hong Kong Dresses Up"	Economic planning within a free-market
"The Kyocera Experiment"	Japanese management in the U.S.
"Not by Jeans Alone"	Levi launches a new product line
"One Man's Multinational"	Similarities in capital & labor in democracies and dictatorships
"Run for the Money"	Commercialization of the Boston Marathon
"Start-Up"	DeLorean's sportscar venture
"Tailspin"	Braniff bankruptcy
"The Buck Stops in Brazil"	Investment in Brazil
"The Colonel Comes to Japan"	Marketing challenges in a different culture
"The Diamond Game"	From South African mines to New York
"The New Space Race"	Competition in the satellite market
"The Making of a Package Deal"	New investment by entertainment industries
"The Selling of Terri Gibbs"	Behind the scenes view of the pop music game
"Wildcatter"	Importance of small oil and gas prospectors

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"A World Turned Upside Down" Purchase: $695.00 Rental: $150.00	American companies need to adapt to to survive in the competitive world economy.

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